The Online #StopAsianHate Movement:
More Global and BTS-Driven Than You'd Think

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The #StopAsianHate (SAH) movement is a social movement against violence targeting Asians and Asian Americans, beginning in 2021. In this study, we examine how topics in the online SAH movement have changed over time and who are the main users driving conversation. Previous descriptive studies have been short-term and focused on conversations in English and/or the U.S. Here, we present a dataset and exploratory analysis constituting the largest study of the online SAH movement to date.

Our dataset contains all tweets including "#StopAsianHate" posted from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022, totaling 6.5M tweets posted by 2.2M users. The dataset includes machine translations (via Google Translate) for the 2M tweets and .5M bios originally written in non-English languages. Our analytic method involves embedding tweets or user bios with the all-MiniLM-L6-v2 model from Sentence-BERT, clustering embeddings via spherical k-means, and using hierarchical clustering to speed manual analysis of clusters.

We are the first to examine non-English SAH tweets and corresponding users (⅓ of tweets and ¼ of users, in 59 languages) – these users and tweets constitute a significant subset of our data but have been mostly unacknowledged by researchers. Our analysis of both English and non-English subsets demonstrates novel findings such as a shift in topic from violent crime in the U.S. to general anti-Asian sentiment globally; the influence of South Korean boyband BTS and their fans in supporting and sustaining the movement; and tension within the hashtag between Asian and Black communities – although there is broad support for #BlackLivesMatter, some users express anti-Black sentiment while others express dissatisfaction about lack of solidarity between Asian and Black communities. Future work will put the tweets in context of the broader media ecosystem by curating and analyzing datasets from other platforms (e.g. Reddit, YouTube, news sites).